

superfund

Terry Kerwin to: forrest.sabrina

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To:

Cc: "Jason Wells" <JWells@silverton.co.us>

Hi Sabrina;

Even though the meeting was less than welcoming, I think it was good that you did a presentation. Having lived here for almost 40 years, I'm used to Cement Creek being the way it is. I worry that we don't know where any of this will take us, the plan is perhaps the start, but it seems that once started it can't be stopped. The powers of the state and federal government can be quite intimidating to a local town government. We would rather avoid them unless we're looking for money. (By the way, I'm speaking as "me", not "the mayor") I think there is a strong feeling that we will lose control of our area (which we all love to go out in regularly – that's why we're here!) if we start down the path to remediation of almost any sort. Yes, this is just basic fear.

As a taxpayer, I question whether the cost will reflect the benefit. Certainly, without various options and their associated costs, we have no real handle on whether this will be a worthwhile effort. Since this is out of my realm, I don't know if we're talking 100K or 100million. My knowledge of the stake holders group is quite limited, but it appears that they have done many low cost, low maintenance efforts that have the appearance of working. At various portals they have channeled the water around the dumps via a sheet of plastic – simple, low tech and done.

Treating the water seems to be a straightforward approach, though I would set up the plant near if not in Silverton for the reliability factor. However, I tend to think that if you then create a "sludge" that is now a hazardous waste, you've achieved only a very minor victory. Back when the mine treated the water, they created this gross "guck" that they then dumped in the tailings ponds. Luckily they didn't run out of room before they stopped treating the water. Surely the solution revolves around pulling the metals out in a usable form or creating a sludge that can then be processed to be safe. This is way out of my league!

Over coffee this morning we came up with two humorous solutions. First, drive a tunnel from Gladstone to the Joker Tunnel by Ironton – no problem!

Second, the eastern slope communities are always looking for more water – here it is! I'm sure there are many more.

If I understand the situation correctly, the EPA doesn't want to waste a lot of time and money on litigation or even on constant bickering (one of our traits). I think the whole thing could be settled via a ballot initiative – I have no idea what the specifics of that initiative would be. The town has an election this coming April in 2012 and the county has an election in November of 2012. Years ago, we thought we might want gambling in Silverton. It was put on the ballot and was soundly defeated – a clear message. The same could be done on the superfund issue – maybe.

Terry Kerwin - milkman